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The Friday Letter

Vol. 11 No. 3

February 23, 1990

On the Hill



At a February 7 hearing before Senate Agriculture Committee, Secretary Yeutter testified on the Bush Administration's proposals for the 1990 Farm Bill. The proposals represent a set of far-reaching ideas on the many important issues under the aegis of USDA. Among the proposals are many concerning FNS programs. These include:

- Reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program at a level to keep pace with food cost increases and encouragement of rapid implementation of electronic benefit transfer systems, which should help reduce vulnerability to fraud. There are also provisions to improve monitoring of stores and increase penalties for abuse.

- Special grants to reach out to the homeless. Although the homeless are eligible, many do not participate. The proposals are designed to increase their participation.

- Requiring single parent families to cooperate with local child support enforcement authorities; this will increase recipient incomes and reduce the need for food stamps. Expanded waiver authority is also proposed to test welfare reform ideas, and improvements are proposed that would simplify the determination of citizenship status.

- Reauthorization of the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program at the level of \$170 million per year, including \$50 million for administrative funds and \$120 million per year for commodities.

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Birge Watkins Visits MARO

Deputy Assistant Secretary Birge Watkins saw firsthand how FNS food assistance programs operate during a recent visit to five MARO sites.

In Philadelphia, Watkins, MARO Administrator Chris Martin, and Public Affairs Director Joe Dunphy had supper at the People's Emergency Center, a homeless shelter for women and children. The center is approved for the school lunch and breakfast programs as a residential child-care institution and for commodities as a charitable institution.



Deputy Assistant Secretary Birge Watkins, top left, and MARO Administrator Chris Martin have supper with People's Emergency Center Executive Director Gloria Guard, center, and residents of the homeless shelter.

The group toured a Philadelphia WIC clinic at Jefferson Hospital that coordinates with a group of health professionals who deal specifically with pregnant women addicted to drugs or alcohol. The WIC and substance abuse staffers talked about the ramifications of drug abuse, particularly crack cocaine, and the resurgence of heroin.

(Watkins Continued Next Page)



Linda Brooks, executive director, NORTH, the WIC local agency that services Philadelphia, describes the elements that make up a WIC voucher.

The 2-day agenda also included a view of a job training session given by Camden County, New Jersey, welfare office staff. As Watkins was leaving the building, he was approached by one of the clients who was attending the classes, which are designed to motivate people to get jobs. After introducing himself, he told Watkins that one of his assignments was to speak to a stranger, and the classes are giving him the confidence to do so.

Lunch was at nearby Albert Burling Elementary School. Some boys at one of the tables were quick to invite the government administrators to eat with them but requested they sit between them and the "girls" at the other end of the table. (They were equally adamant about not swapping their chicken nuggets for run-of-the-mill brown bag items.)



Students at the Albert Burling Elementary School in Pennsauken, New Jersey, entertain their luncheon guest with stories of their favorite heavy metal music groups and the fun they have with the school computers.

Watkins spent the next several hours at the regional office where he met the staff individually.

The tour continued the following day at the Berks County, Pennsylvania, Department of Public Welfare. Officials there briefed Watkins on the electronic benefits transfer food stamp project, the first of its kind in the nation. He visited a store in the area and observed the food stamp "credit card" transactions.

The last stop was a visit to the Philadelphia Field Office where Watkins had an opportunity to meet the field staff personally.

-Story by Marian Wig
Photos by Marian Wig and Joe Dunphy
MARO Public Affairs Staff

Commodity Recipients Get "Super" Treatment

Money isn't needed when recipients to USDA's Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) go grocery shopping at a new supermarket warehouse facility in Des Moines, Iowa. Program funding and food are provided by FNS to low-income elderly clients as well as for infants; children up to age 6; and pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women. Over 6,000 Polk County residents were served monthly last year.

The facility is located at a former supermarket, across the street from a food stamp office and senior center. The warehouse features a demonstration kitchen operated by home economists from USDA's Extension Service. They show recipients how to prepare tasty

(CSFP Continued)

dishes using commodity foods. A well-baby clinic is also on the premises, offering immunizations, lead-poisoning screening, and a blood test to determine iron levels.

When clients enter the store, a computer terminal issues an application; cross-checks it for dual participation with another FNS program for women, infants, and children; issues a notice of decision; and creates a shopping list. Armed with the list and a shopping cart, recipients can select a 1- or 2-month supply from various food groups. They may refuse anything that can't be used without waste.

Checkout lanes and bar-code scanners speed checkout. A computer belt transfers food selections to a pickup point where shoppers can load them into their cars, completing the "super" operation.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

MWRO Demonstrates CSFP Automation/Bar Coding Project



Midwest food program specialist Mike Drew recently demonstrated to Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) local and state agency staff how bar coding USDA foods in the CSFP Automation Project improves the inventory and certification process.

Bar codes are scanned as participants pick up their food packages. Management Information coordinator Jack Klecka demonstrated how to scan the bar codes on USDA commodities. CSFP computer programmers at Focus:HOPE in Detroit, Michigan, under the direction of MWRO staff, incorporated the bar coding into an existing computerized CSFP automated inventory/certification software program developed by SWRO.

A user manual is being developed. When completed, the software program will be distributed to CSFP state agencies throughout the country.

-Story and photo by Mary Jane
Getlinger, MWRO Public Affairs Staff

Donated Toys and Canned Goods Make for Happier Holidays

The holiday season was a little happier for some of New Jersey's less fortunate due to the generosity of MARO employees. Holiday donations this year came in the form of 243 canned goods and 102 stuffed animals. MARO's Health and Recreation Committee donated \$50 towards the purchase of canned goods.

The canned goods were donated to New Jersey's Trenton Soup Kitchen and to the Mercer County Board of Social Services to be distributed to the needy. The stuffed animals were given to the Toys for Tots Program sponsored by the U.S. Marines for distribution to families referred by the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

Jim Streeter, office services assistant, and Brenda Styles, Civil Rights/EEO director, coordinated the collection of donations.

-Story by Kim Jabat
MARO Public Affairs Staff

New WIC Van Displayed

MARO Administrator Chris Martin attended a Pennsylvania local WIC directors' meeting in Harrisburg where the state's new WIC VAN 1 was on display.

WIC VAN 1 is a self-contained 24-foot van designed as a mobile WIC office complete with education and medical exam areas, a restroom, small kitchen, computerized data system, and its own electrical generator. It is equipped to provide a full range of WIC services to participants in rural areas.

The Family Health Council of Western Pennsylvania operates the van and was able to purchase it partly with USDA funding.

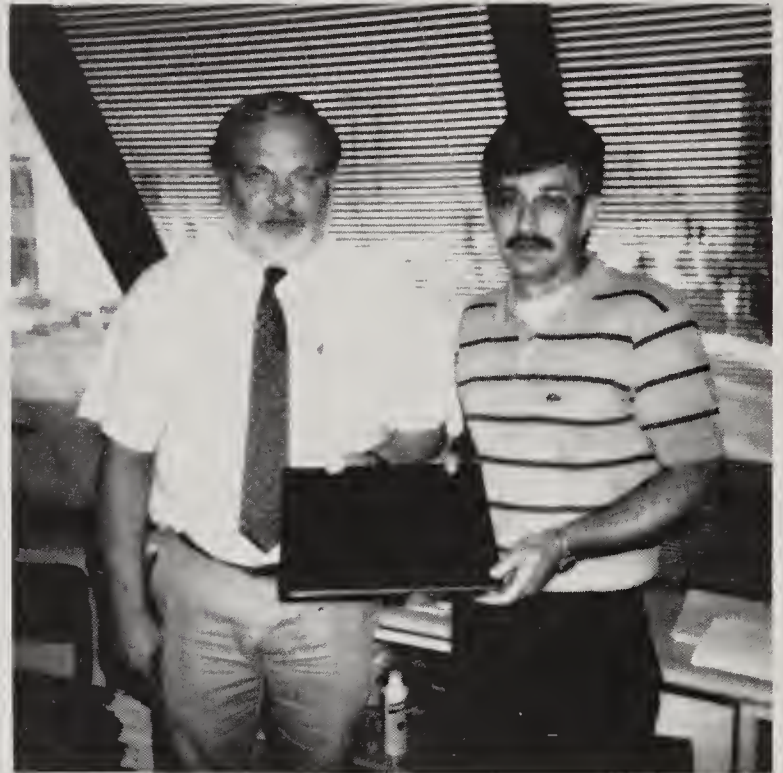
WIC VAN 1 is on the road Monday through Friday and is staffed by a nutritionist and nutrition assistant, who also drive.



Along side of WIC VAN 1 is MARO Administrator Chris Martin (right) shown with (from left) nutritionist Kathy Lazzeri, nutritionist assistant Roxanne Steffy, Pennsylvania WIC Director Frank Maisano, and WIC Director Natalie Guiler of the Family Health Council of Western Pennsylvania.

-Story by Kim Jabat
MARO Public Affairs Staff
Photo courtesy of Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Operator Recognized at Minneapolis Computer Support Center



Chief David E. Saarela of the Minneapolis Computer Support Center (MCSC), left, presents Robert B. Hartmann, offset duplicating press operator, with a certificate of appreciation for continued superior job performance far exceeding the expected. His efforts are largely responsible for MCSC's ability to produce and distribute Food Stamp Program notices in a timely and effective manner. Hartmann was also honored as a civil servant of the year for 1989 by the Federal Executive Board of the Twin Cities.

-Story by Dave Saarela
Photo by John Erickson
Minneapolis Computer Support Center



Our Health Unit Gets Involved

Did you know the Health Unit here at POC has a variety of ongoing wellness activities? Thanks to our registered nurse, Barbara Perkey, many programs have been organized that might be of interest to you:

- Cardiac profiles
- Body composition
- Cholesterol checks
- Blood pressure screenings
- Health risk appraisal
- CPR classes
- Exercise speakers
- Noon walkers
- Smoking cessation
- Health fair in May
- Blood drives
- Corporate rates on spas and health clubs

Currently, there are 35 noon walkers. Barbara is recruiting volunteers for this and the other programs as part of the Wellness Committee. These volunteers can help sign up FNS employees for the wellness activities. The committee meets for lunch once every 3 months.

In addition, Barbara has brought to the Health Unit over 100 books, videos, and cassette tapes on self-help and teaching tools. The books may be signed out, and/or you may use the tape player or VCR in the Health Unit. Pamphlets on today's health issues are on display as well as a bulletin board listing current activities.

If you would like to participate in any of these activities, call our nurse, Barbara Perkey, at 756-6000.



-Story by Linda Boling
Public Information Staff

MPRO Handicapped Program Registers Success

MPRO Handicapped Program Manager Moe Thibault announced that last year's ice cream party and bake sale, plus sales of notepaper, netted a total of \$511.75 for Wilderness on Wheels (W.O.W.), a participating Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) organization that is working to make wilderness areas accessible to the handicapped. Roger West, founder of W.O.W., is pictured (right) receiving a check from MPRO Deputy Administrator Forrest Moore.



W.O.W. is dependent on volunteer help to build a rock dam across Kenosha Creek and an 8-foot-wide boardwalk that will eventually reach the top of a 12,300-foot mountain in the Colorado Rockies. More than 20,000 volunteer hours have gone into the project so far, and FNS employees have put together four different "Give-a-Day" groups over the past 2 years to help with the work.

The latest issue of W.O.W.'s newsletter praises Moe's efforts in raising funds and people-power for the project, as well as helping put together the necessary paperwork for its CFC application.

-Story by Joanne Widner
Photo by Craig Forman
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

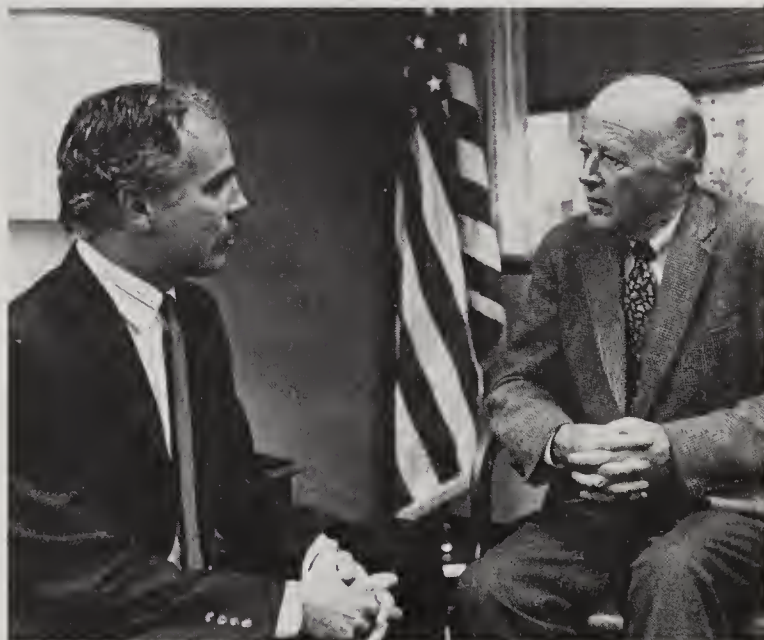
NERO Promotes Plastic Recycling for School Lunch Programs



NERO Administrator Harold McLean (right) and Special Nutrition Programs Director John Magnarelli (center) examine styrofoam fragments ready for recycling while Don King, manager at the Plastics Again recycling facility, describes the process. McLean and Magnarelli visited the plant, located in Leominster, Massachusetts, as part of NERO's campaign to encourage schools to recycle styrofoam and plastic utensils used in their lunch programs. The campaign is part of NERO's overall promotion of recycling, an effort to forward the President's stand on the environment. "Recycling seems like something new," said McLean, "but the

potential was always there. It was the logical choice not made. As we keep using natural resources, recycling is becoming not just the logical choice, but the only one."

In addition, McLean discussed paper recycling with Randy Price, reporter for WBZ-TV in Boston. Price and his camera crew visited NERO to film a 60-second spot for WBZ's TIME OUT/PROJECT EARTH feature series. The spot, featuring a number of NERO employees, highlighted the regional office's efforts in paper recycling and was broadcast 11 times. NERO's "Save A Tree, Recycle Paper" campaign has, in less than 1 year, collected enough paper to save more than 60 trees.



-Story and photos by
NERO Public Affairs Staff

(Hill Continued From Page 1)

Hearings on the FNS portion of the Farm Bill are tentatively scheduled for February 27 by the Senate Agriculture Committee and February 28 by the House Agriculture Committee.

- Story by Robert Beard
Office of Governmental Affairs

FWP Offers Training Courses

"Excellence in Agriculture--Tapping It's Resources" is the theme for the four USDA Training for Women conferences sponsored by the Department's Federal Women's Program (FWP). The objectives of this training program are:

- To offer career-related training targeted for women.

(FWP Continued Page 8)

Food Programs Participation Update

Following are preliminary estimates of participation in the Federal-State food assistance programs for the month of November with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year.

	<u>Nov. 1988</u>	<u>Oct. 1989</u>	<u>Nov. 1989</u> 2/
<u>Food Stamp Program: 1/</u>			
People participating (mil.)	18.4	19.5	19.1
Value of bonus coupons (\$ mil.)	959.7	1,171.8	1,136.7
Average bonus per person	\$ 52.07	\$ 60.24	\$ 59.47
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	1,061.8	1,285.9	1,250.8
<u>National School Lunch Program:</u>			
Number of schools participating (thous.)	91.5	N/A	N/A
Children participating (mil.)	24.7	24.3	24.5
Children reached with free or reduced price lunches (mil.)	11.6	11.5	11.6
Percentage of lunches served free	39.9	40.7	40.4
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price	6.8	6.8	6.9
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	369.3	424.2	384.2
<u>School Breakfast Program:</u>			
Number of schools participating (thous.)	40.0	N/A	N/A
Children participating (mil.)	3.9	4.0	4.1
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price	86.8	85.9	85.7
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	53.8	66.0	62.0
<u>Child and Adult Care Food Program:</u>			
Number of meals served in centers (mil.)	39.8	43.5	40.8
Number of meals served in homes (mil.)	31.9	38.6	36.9
Percentage of all meals served free	78.7	79.5	79.6
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	56.9	68.2	64.9
<u>Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC):</u>			
People participating (mil.)	3.8	4.5	4.5
Food cost (\$ mil.)	123.4	133.6	134.5
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	151.1	165.6	164.2
<u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program: 3/</u>			
People participating (thous.)	220.4	279.2	280.7
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	3.9	5.5	5.4
<u>Food Distribution to Indians and Needy Families:</u>			
Number of projects in operation	108	109	109
People participating (thous.)	135.0	140.6	139.3
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	4.8	4.6	4.7
<u>Total USDA Food Donations (All Programs):</u>			
Entitlement Foods (\$ mil.)	66.3	72.2	63.3
Bonus Foods (\$ mil.)	55.3	26.1	23.4
Temporary Emergency Food Assistance (TEFAP) ..	12.4	18.4	17.4

1/ Puerto Rico has been excluded from all months.

2/ Data collected as of January 24, 1990.

3/ Includes data for all elderly participants.

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the vacant positions listed below. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Application for Federal Employment, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you are interested in a headquarters position, apply to the Operations Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Virginia

22302. Apply directly to headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For regional positions, apply directly to the regional office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or copies can be obtained from the appropriate regional or headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Food Prog. Admin. Spec. (A)		GS-0120	5/7	05/01/90	90-B	FNS-N
o Nutritionist (A)		GS-0630	13	02/27/90	90-H-34	HNIS
o Nutritionist (A)		GS-0630	11/12	02/26/90	90-H-40	HNIS
o Program Analyst (A)		GM-0345	14	03/05/90	90-49	OAE
o Program Analyst (A)		GM-0345	14	03/05/90	90-50	OAE
o Prop. Util. Spec. (FNS-HQ)		GS-1104	12	03/13/90	90-51	ASD
o Motor Veh. Operator (FNS-HQ)		WG-5703	6	03/13/90	90-52	ASD
o Secretary (Typing) (A)		GS-0318	5/6	03/19/90	90-53	ACD
o Systems Accountant (A)		GS-0510	13	03/16/90	90-54	ACD
o Food Program Spec. (FNS-HQ)		GS-0120	12	03/08/90	90-55	FDD

Office Location

OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation
 HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
 ASD - Administrative Services Division
 FDD - Food Distribution Division
 ACD - Accounting Division
 FNS-N - Food and Nutrition Service -
 Nationwide

Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition
 Service (Hdqs)

(FWP Continued From Page 6)

- To provide USDA employees an opportunity to discuss perceived and real barriers to the development, retention, and advancement of women, and offer solutions to Department officials.

- To publicize USDA's goals and initiatives for women.

Barbara Gary, USDA's FWP manager and coordinator of the training, has a task

force of USDA agency FWP managers helping her organize the conferences. The regional administrators have been asked to send at least one person, and more if possible. Put your training request in early and see if we can get support for at least one person from each deputy administrator's area to go to one of the four conferences. Registration forms are available from Eunice Bowman, headquarters FWP co-manager, and member of the Department's task force. Contact Eunice Bowman at 756-3195.